

# SEEING LIFE WITH JOHN HENRY

By Geo. V. Hobart

## John Henry on the Servant Problem.

WHEN Peaches and I get tired of the Big Town—tired of its noises and hullabaloo; tired of being tagged by taxis as we cross a street; tired of watching grocers and butchers hoisting higher the cost of living—that's our cue to grab a choo-choo and breeze out to Uncle Peter Grant's farm and bungalow in the wilds of Westchester, which he calls Troolyrooral.

Just to even matters up, Uncle Peter and his wife visit us from time to time in our amateur apartment in the Big Town.

Uncle Peter is a very stout old gentleman. When he squeezes into our little flat the walls act as if they were bowlegged.

Uncle Peter always goes through the folding doors sideways, and every time he sits down the man in the apartment below us kicks because we move the piano so often.

Aunt Martha is Uncle Peter's wife and she weighs more and breathes softer.

When the two of them visit our bird cage at the same time the janitor has to go out and stand in front of the building with a view to catching it if it falls.

When we reached Troolyrooral we found that "Cousin Elsie" Schultz was also a visitor there.

"Cousin Elsie" is a sort of privileged character in the family, having lived with Aunt Martha for over twenty years as a sort of housekeeper.

They call her "Cousin Elsie" just to make it more difficult. Three or four years ago Elsie married Gustave Bierbauer and quit her job.

"Cousin Elsie" believes that conversation was invented for her exclusive use, and the way she can grab a bundle of the English language and break it up is a caution.

Language is the same to Elsie as a siphon is to a highball—and that's a whole lot.

Two years after their marriage old Gustave stopped living so abruptly that the coroner had to sit on him.

The post mortem found out that Gustave had died from a rush of words to his brain pan.

The coroner also found, upon further examination, that all of these words had formerly belonged to Elsie, with the exception of a few which were once the property of Gustave's favorite bartender.

After Gustave's exit Aunt Martha tried to get Elsie back on her job, but the old Dutch had her eye on Herman Schulz, and finally married him.

So now every once in a while Elsie moseys over from Plainfield, N. J., where she lives with Herman, and proceeds to sew a lot of pillow slips and things for Aunt Martha.

One morning while Peaches and I were at breakfast Elsie meandered in, bearing in her hand a wedding invitation which Herman had forwarded to her from Plainfield.

Being, as I say, a privileged character, she does pretty much as she likes around the bungalow.

Elsie read the invitation: "Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Ganderkurds request the honor of your presence at the marriage of their daughter, Verberna, to Galahad Schalenberger, at der home of der bride's parents, Plainfield, N. J. March Sixteenth. R. S. V. P."

"Well," said Elsie, "I know der Ganderkurds and I know der Galahad Schalenberger; he's a floorwalker in Bauerhaupt's grocery store, but I doan't know vot it is dot R. S. V. P. yet!"

I gently kicked Peaches on the instep under the table, and said to Elsie: "Well, that is a new one on me. Are you sure it isn't B. & O. or the C. R. R. of N. J.? I've heard of those two railroads in New Jersey, but I never heard of the R. S. V. P."

For the first time in her life since she's been able to grab a sentence between her teeth and shake the pronouns out of it Elsie was fazed.

She kept looking at the invitation and saying to herself, "R. S. V. P. I vot is it? I know der honor of your presence; I know

der bride's parents, but I don't know R. S. V. P."

All that day Elsie wandered through the house muttering to herself: "R. S. V. P. I vot is it? Is it some secret between the bride and groom? R. S. V. P. I It ain't my initials, because they begin mit E. S. Vot is dot R. S. V. P. I vot is it? Vot is it?"

That evening we were all at dinner when Elsie rushed in with a cry of joy. "I got it!" she said. "I haf untied der meaning of dot R. S. V. P. It means Real Silver Vedding Presents!"

I was just about to drink a glass of water, but I changed my mind and nearly choked to death.

Peaches tried to say something which resulted in a gurgle in her throat, while Uncle Peter fell off his chair and landed on a cat which had never done him any harm.

Elsie's interpretation of that wedding invitation is going to set Herman Schultz back several dollars, or I'm not a foot high.

And maybe they don't have their troubles at Troolyrooral with the servant problem.

It's one hard problem that—and nobody seems to get the right answer.

One morning later on Peaches and I were out on the top porch drinking in the glorious air and chatting with Hep Hardy, who had come out to spend Sunday with us, when Aunt Martha came bustling out, followed by Uncle Peter, who, in turn, was followed by Lizzie Jones, their latest cook.

Lizzie wore a new lid, trimmed with prairie grass and field daisies, hanging like a shade over the left lamp; she had a grouchy looking grip in one hand and a green umbrella with black freckles in the other.

She was made up to catch the first train that sniffed into the station.

Aunt Martha whispered to us plaintively: "Lizzie has been here only two days and this makes the seventh time she has started for town."

Busy Lizzie took the center of the stage and scowled at her audience. "I'm takin' the next train for town, mem!" she announced with considerable bitterness.

Uncle Peter made a brave effort to scowl back at her, but she flashed her lanterns at him and he fell back two paces to the rear.

"What is it this time, Lizzie?" inquired Aunt Martha.

Lizzie put the grouchy grip down, folded her arms and said: "Oh, I have me grievances!"

Uncle Peter sidled up to Aunt Martha and said in a hoarse whisper: "My dear, this shows a lack of firmness on your part. Now leave everything to me and let me settle this obstreperous servant once and for all."

Uncle Peter crossed over and got in the limelight with Lizzie.

"It occurs to me," he began in polished accents, "that this is an occasion upon which I should publicly point out to you the error of your ways, and send you back to your humble station with a better knowledge of your status in this household."

"Scat!" said Lizzie, and Uncle Peter began to fish for his next line.

"I want you to understand," he went on, "that I pay you your wages!"

"Sure, if you didn't" was Lizzie's comeback, "I'd land on you good and hard, that I would. What else are you here for, you fathead?"

"Fathead!" echoed Uncle Peter in astonishment.

"Peter, leave her to me," pleaded Aunt Martha.

But Uncle Peter rushed blindly on to destruction. "Elizabeth," he said sternly, "in view of your most unrefined and unladylike language it behooves me to reprimand you severely. I will, therefore—"

Then Lizzie and the green umbrella struck a Casey-at-the-bat pose and cut in: "G'wan away with your dime novel talk or I'll place the back of me unladylike hand on your jowls!"

"Peter!" warningly exclaimed the perturbed Aunt Martha.

"Yes, Martha; you're right," the old gentleman said, turning hastily. "I must hurry and finish my correspondence before the morning mail goes." And he faded away.

"It isn't an easy matter to get servants out here," Aunt Martha whispered to us. "I must humor her."



Then Lizzie and the green umbrella struck a Casey-at-the-bat pose.

"Now, Lizzie, what's wrong?" "You told me, mem, that I should have a room with a southern exposure," said the Queen of the Bungalow.

"And isn't the room as described?" inquired Aunt Martha.

"The room is all right, but I don't care for the exposure," said the Princess of Porkchops.

"Well, what's wrong?" insisted our patient Auntie.

"Sure," said the Baroness of Bread Pudding, "the room is so exposed, mem, that every breeze

from the North Pole just natchally hikes in there and keeps me settin' up in bed all night shiverin' like I was shakin' dice for the drinks. When I want that kind of exercise I'll hire out as chambermaid in a cold storage. I'm a cook, mem, it's true, but I'm no relation to Doctor Cook, and I ain't eager to sleep in a room where even a polar bear would be growlin' for a fur coat."

"Very well, Lizzie," said Aunt Martha, soothingly. "I'll have storm windows put on at

once and extra quilts sent to the room, and a gas stove, if you wish."

"All right, mem," said the Countess of Cornbeef, removing the lid. "I'll stay, but keep that husband of yours with the woozy lingo out of the kitchen, because I'm a nervous woman—I am that." And then the Duchess of Deviled Kidneys got a strangle hold on her green umbrella and ducked for the grub foundry.

Aunt Martha sighed and went in the house.

"Hep," I said, "this scene with Her Highness of Clam Chowder ought to be an awful warning to you. No man should get married these days unless he's sure his wife can juggle the frying pan and take a fall out of an egg beater. They've had eight cooks in eight days, and every time a new face comes in the kitchen the coal scuttle screams with fright."

"You can see where they've worn a new trail across the lawn on the retreat to the depot."

"It's an awful thing, Hep. Our

palates are weak from same different styles of mashed potatoes.

"We had one last week answered roll call when yelled Phyllis.

"Isn't that a peach handle for a kitchen queen a map like the Borough Bronx on a dark night?" "She came here well mended—by herself. She she knew how to cook ward."

"We believed her after first meal, because that's she cooked it."

"Phyllis was a very inv girl. She could cook any on earth or in the waters neath the earth, and she it by trying to mix ten nails with the baked bean."

"When Phyllis found was no shredded oats in house for breakfast she ch the cover of the washtu sawdust and sprinkled it the whisk broom, chopped."

"It wasn't a half bad fast food of the home-made but every time I took a dr water the sawdust used to up in my throat and tick."

"The first and only da was with us Phyllis squ two dollars' worth of egg ing to make a lemon me potpie."

"She tried to be artist this, but one of the eggs w and nervous and it slipped."

"Uncle Peter asked Ph she could cook some Hun goulash, and Phyllis scre 'No, my parents have Swedes all their lives!' she ran him across the with the carving knife."

"Aunt Martha went i kitchen to ask what was f ner and Phyllis got back 'I'm a woman, it is true, will show you that I can secret!'"

"When the meal came table we were compelled the secret with her."

"It looked like Irish tasted like clam chowder behaved like a bad boy."

"On the second day idenly occurred to Phyllis she was working, so she h in her resignation, handed the gardener, a jolt in h department, handed out a unnecessary talk and let flat."

"The next rebate we h the kitchen was a colored named James Buchanan P. grast."

"James was all there carry four. He was one most careful cooks that made faces at the roast be."

"The evening he arriv intended to have shad ro dinner, and James inform that that was where he li."

"Eight o'clock came a dinner. Then Aunt M went in the kitchen to c him that we were human with appetites."

"She found careful counting the roe to see fish dealer had sent the number."

"He was up to 2,196.49 still had a half pound to g."

"James left that nigh loved by shouts of ap from all present."

"I'm telling you all this just to prove that fate is while it delays your ve until some genius invent automatic cook made of a num and electricity."

Hep laughed and sho head.

"The servant problem delay my wedding," he ch "If there wasn't a cook the world we wouldn't be're going to be veget because we're going to the Garden of Eden."

"Tush!" I snickered. "Tush, yourself!" said H

"Oh, tush, both of you, Peaches. "John said that thing to me three weeks w we were married."

"Sure I did," I went "and we're still in the G aren't we? Of course, I want to sublet part of it have Hep and his bride moonstruck through your berry beds that's up to y."

"Well," said friend w ing alone in the Garden of is all right, but after you've there three or four there's a mild excitement hearing a strange voice, e it is that of a serpent!"

Close the door, Delia, I draft.

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## AUTHORS AND BOOKS

(Continued from Preceding Page.)

sion to win Betty, not knowing she is secretly engaged and believing her to be heart-whole and fancy free. John Tracey, who feels sure, is an honorable young man of high standards. In the meantime, Tom Courtney, her fiancé, gets into financial difficulties, and knowing of the friendship existing between Betty and John Tracey, writes Betty urging her to use her influence with Tracey in securing a loan. This letter Betty receives a letter from Courtney, telling her not to marry Tracey and declaring his love. This she gives to Courtney, who is then told by Courtney that he has never loved anyone else and that the attachment between Courtney and herself was childlike. Betty attempts to tell of her former engagement to John Tracey, but he persuades her to wait until after the honeymoon. On the day set for the wedding Betty receives a letter from Courtney, telling her not to marry Tracey and declaring his love. This she gives to Courtney, who is then told by Courtney that he has never loved anyone else and that the attachment between Courtney and herself was childlike.

John Tracey will impress the reader as a man of high ideals, though so unusual as to seem unreal. However, his residence in Japan may account in a measure for his extreme views. It is a thoroughly unusual character, and the reader cannot but be benefited.

### BOOK ON CURRENCY.

The operation of the New Bank Act, by Thomas M. Lave, Jr. Boston: The Boston Book Company, 1913. Pp. 128. Price, 75 cents. This book is a very attractive reader for the second and third school years, with many illustrations. It is a book of two little children who live in the country. They learn to skate on their father's pond, and give their playmates a ride. They thoroughly enjoy an afternoon's fun with their playmates, and are very happy. The book is a very attractive reader for the second and third school years, with many illustrations. It is a book of two little children who live in the country. They learn to skate on their father's pond, and give their playmates a ride. They thoroughly enjoy an afternoon's fun with their playmates, and are very happy. The book is a very attractive reader for the second and third school years, with many illustrations. It is a book of two little children who live in the country. 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